



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH & WELFARE**

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**INFORMATIONAL LETTER #2006-2**

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**DATE:** March 22, 2006

**TO:** ALL RESIDENTIAL OR ASSISTED LIVING FACILITIES IN IDAHO

**FROM:** DEBBY RANSOM, R.N., R.H.I.T., Chief  
Bureau of Facility Standards

**SUBJECT:** **FIRE ALARM SYSTEM RELEASE ~ ELECTRONIC LOCKING**

As part of the fire safety survey conducted on a residential/assisted living facility, observation of a test of the fire alarm system is usually conducted. Part of that observation/test is to verify that any electronic locks installed on doors release automatically upon activation of the fire alarm system.

During observation of fire alarm system testing, the surveyors noted that the electronic locks released upon activation of the fire alarm system as required. However, in some cases it was determined that when the fire alarm system was silenced, the electronic locks re-energized (i.e., the doors re-locked and could not be opened).

Once a fire alarm system is “activated” (i.e., alarm sounds), the system is considered “activated” until such time as it has been reset to a normal condition. Silencing of the alarm system **DOES NOT** constitute a reset of the system and the system is still considered “activated.” Any/all electronic door lock(s) shall remain released until such time as the fire alarm system has been reset to normal condition. Note: The fire alarm system should not be reset until after a determination has been made as to what caused the system to activate in the first place.

Any facility that has electronic locks on doors needs to verify that power to each electronic door lock remains off until such time as the fire alarm system has been reset. If power to the locks is restored simply upon silencing the fire alarm system, modifications to the system will need to be made. Correction of any non-conforming

system will need to be made no later than 30 days from the date of this Informational Letter.

Observation of a test of the facility's fire alarm system will continue to be made as part of the fire safety survey conducted by staff from this office. A citation will be issued where any system is found to be non-compliant after Monday, April 24, 2006.

Should you have any questions, contact Roger Gehrke, Supervisor, Facility Fire Safety and Construction Section, or Eric Mundell, REHS, Residential Community Care Program at 334-6626.



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DEBBY RANSOM, R.N., R.H.I.T., Chief  
Bureau of Facility Standards

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c: Idaho Assisted Living Association (IDALA)  
Idaho Health Care Association (IHCA)